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LISTING OF CLAIMS

1-22. (Canceled)

23. (New) A method of balancing workload in a Voice-over-Internet Protocol (VoIP) system having at least one VoIP client, a plurality of VoIP proxy servers and a load monitor, comprising:

receiving a query from the VoIP client with the load monitor, the query requesting an identity of the VoIP proxy server among the plurality of VoIP proxy servers that has the lowest workload;

with the load monitor, determining the identity of the VoIP proxy server among the plurality of VoIP proxy servers that has the lowest workload by comparing workload data received from each VoIP proxy server;

transmitting the identity of the VoIP proxy server among the plurality of VoIP proxy servers that has the lowest workload from the load monitor to the VoIP client; and
the VoIP client communicating with the identified VoIP proxy server to initiate a VoIP call.

24. (New) The method of claim 23, further comprising polling each VoIP proxy server for the workload data with the load monitor on a periodic basis.

25. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein each of the VoIP proxy servers spontaneously report workload data to the load monitor.

26. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein workload data is continuously collected by the load monitor from each of the VoIP proxy servers.

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27. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the load monitor collects the workload data from the VoIP proxy servers after receipt of the query from the VoIP client.

28. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein if two or more of the VoIP proxy servers have the lowest workload, the load manager selects one of the VoIP proxy servers to identify to the VoIP client.

29. (New) The method of claim 28, wherein the selection is made based on VoIP proxy server proximity to a gateway through which the VoIP communicates.

30. (New) The method of claim 28, wherein the selection is made based on a historical workload statistic.